

# Freedom



November 7, 2004

## Watch

*Marines meet challenges, supply troops*  
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*ANA's first inspectors general graduate*  
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Staff Sgt. Monica R. Garreau

## Snack time

An Afghan girl shares a snack of walnuts with Sgt. Rachel Kotter, a JTF Wings medic, in Jildalek village Oct. 14. Kotter was in the village in central Afghanistan with a group of TF Pirate Soldiers making an Adopt a Village visit to bring medical and veterinary assistance to those living there.

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A Marine CH-53 Sea Stallion from HMH-769 flies over the Afghan countryside on a resupply mission. The Marines of HMH-769 applied many lessons learned during their time in Afghanistan to their mission of resupplying Coalition forces in remote areas of the country.

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# Freedom Watch

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# CGSC: *Third class graduates, officers ready to serve*

Story and photo by  
Master Sgt. D. Keith Johnson  
Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan — Another group of Afghan National Army officers has joined the ranks of professional soldiers.

The Command and General Staff College in Kabul graduated its third class of officers Oct. 20. The three-month-long course taught advanced officer subjects to 60 field grade ANA officers. So far, 170 officers have completed the course.

In a speech given in French, Dari and English, the graduates were challenged to “apply the procedures, prepare the orders of your chiefs with rigor and take care of their execution. It is that to be a staff officer,” said French Lt. Col. J. Laronce.

“You are officers of great value, and you make honor to your country,” he added.

Their value was also recognized by one of their own.

“This college raises the professional knowledge of the officers who will take part in the Afghan National Army units,” said Gen. Bismullah Khan, chief of the General Staff.

Bismullah Khan also noted the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration process. DDR involves the disarming and demobilizing of the Afghan Militia Forces and reintegrating AMF soldiers into other elements of Afghan society, to include the ANA. This was of particular interest to this class.

Ten percent of CGSC Class 3 consisted of former AMF officers who were demobi-



**Gen. Bismullah Khan, Chief of the Afghan National Army General Staff, reviews the assembled CGSC class prior to the graduation ceremony.**

lized by DDR and who have now completed this prestigious school and are going into positions of increased responsibility in the ANA.

To attend the course, the officers completed a competitive exam given by the French instructors at Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix. The French Army trains all ANA officers, while the British Army trains all ANA noncommissioned officers.

The ANA is moving toward having its own programs. Earlier CGSC courses were taught by French instructors. This course was taught by ANA officers, supported by

the French. Future courses will be all ANA instruction.

The graduates will be assigned to work on the general staff at one of the four regional commands throughout Afghanistan.

The enthusiasm of the graduates was obvious.

“We appreciate the U.S. and French for furnishing us such an opportunity to increase our military skills and training,” said the top graduate, Col. Lajaward, who goes by only one name. “We promise that we will do our best for the ANA and the Ministry of Defense to progress very well.”

## Bagram MWR Events

### Sunday

1630-2100 – Country/Western Night

### Monday

1630-2100 – Latino Salsa Dance Lessons

### Tuesday

1500-1930 – Karaoke

### Wednesday

1500-1600 – Bingo

1600-2100 – Modeling/Arts & Crafts Night

### Thursday

1630-2100 – Old School Night

### Friday

1630-2100 – Hip Hop/R&B Night

### Saturday

1630-2100 – Salsa Night

\* All events at Dragon Palace

## OEF “Values” Essay Contest

All personnel serving in Afghanistan are invited to participate in the Operation Enduring Freedom bi-monthly “Values” Essay Contest sponsored by CJTF-76.

The current value is “**Honor.**”

### Rules

- ☐ Essays should include the definition of the featured value and your own experience(s) that reinforce this value
- ☐ Essays will be at least one and no more than two pages (typed/neatly printed and double-spaced)
- ☐ Please include a cover page with Title, Author’s Name, Supervisor’s Name, Unit/Organization, Phone Number and e-mail address if available
- ☐ Do not put name directly on essay
- ☐ Submit essays to EO Advisor nearest your location, via email or hard copy by **Nov. 15**

The winning essay writer will receive a Commanding General’s Certificate of Achievement and other prizes to be announced. The essay will also be published in a future issue of the *Freedom Watch*, and in the bi-monthly EO Update.

Call the Bagram EO Senior Advisor at DSN 318-231-3021 for more information.

# Soldiers see Afghan transformation



Spc. Johnnie French

**Soldiers from the 82nd Abn. Div.'s 1st Bn., 505th PIR, patrol a village in Paktika province in eastern Afghanistan.**

## *Paratroopers return, note dramatic changes*

Story by Spc. Chris Stump  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — In just over three years, Afghanistan has made tremendous strides in security and reconstruction. Such great strides that the country's citizens were able to participate in a safe, democratic election last month.

Along the road to a free society, the Afghans have had a partner in the U.S.-led Coalition and the units that support the largest Coalition ever assembled.

Some of the units most familiar with the country of Afghanistan, and all that has changed within it in the previous three years, are the 82nd Airborne Division and its subordinate units.

With the call up of 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, to assist with election security, many paratroopers were afforded the opportunity to not only come back to provide security, but to see how the country has changed since their last deployment here in the summer of 2002.

Then, the hunt for Taliban and al-Qaida remnants was still in its early stages and civil affairs missions were just getting started, said Sgt. 1st Class Michael J. Lahoda, Company C, 1st Bn., 505th PIR, platoon sergeant.

The paratroopers spent their previous deployment actively searching for the enemy, making way for the stability that would be needed to start the reconstruction process.

The humanitarian and civil affairs-type missions that started a little over two years ago have greatly impacted Afghanistan and caused many Soldiers who have seen the "before and after" to think about all that has been done to bring the country to where it is today.

"It seems people are more affluent now — people are much more friendly to Coalition forces than they were the last time I was here," said Lahoda.

"I think the humanitarian aid and civil affairs efforts have made a huge difference in how the Afghans feel about us being here."

***"It's a great moment in history to be a part of."***

With the focus of missions going from strictly combat operations to a combination of combat and civil military assistance missions, the Coalition has made tremendous progress in gaining the confidence of the Afghan people that has led to the country's first democratic election.

"If you treat a child or an infant, it goes a long way to help and gain the trust of the people," said Lahoda.

During the last few years of trust building, Afghanistan has changed within itself, not just toward outsiders like the Coalition.

With the eviction of the Taliban, many have begun embracing what they had been

denied during the Taliban's rule.

Since the first time Spc. Matthew Popejoy was here, girls are now going to school, women who want to have started to shed their burkas and many have taken the opportunity to earn a living by becoming entrepreneurs or working for the Coalition.

"Everything is so much more built up here," said the team leader from Co. C, 1st Bn., 505th PIR. "The people are friendlier ... and look like they have a little more money in their pockets."

The changes the paratroopers have seen are definitely more than position improvements on Coalition installations. The

changes that have occurred since the oust of the Taliban have touched nearly everyone the infantrymen have seen during their current deployment.

"It's kind of mind-blowing," said Popejoy.

"When I got here (this time) I didn't recognize the base," he said. "And when I went out the gate into Bagram village, I saw how much it had changed and how the people looked different."

Making a difference for the better is why many appreciate what they've come here to do. And with the Oct. 9 presidential election running smoother and more safely than many expected, those who have been a part of operations here from nearly the beginning have much to be proud of.

"It's a great moment in history to be a part of," said Lahoda. "You don't get to be at the edge of that very often."



# 'Tis the season for influx of holiday mail

## *Holiday letters, gifts must be sent early for timely delivery*

Story by  
Staff Sgt. Monica R. Garreau  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

AFGHANISTAN — The ability to send and receive mail while deployed is one of the biggest morale boosters for those serving in Afghanistan.

And with the holiday season quickly approaching, it's important to remember that letters and packages must be mailed far enough in advance to reach the intended recipient.

"During the holiday, the mail flow increases to twice the normal amount," said 1st Lt. Quana Wright, the Bagram, Camp Phoenix and Kabul Postal officer in charge.

Wright suggests that Soldiers tell their families the suggested mailing dates for packages to arrive in theater.

It can take two to three weeks for mail to reach the recipient if they receive mail at the three main bases, and "it takes even longer to get out to the forward operating base

sites," she said.

By following the dates listed below,

Soldiers can expect their incoming packages to arrive at their location by Christmas, as well as their outgoing mail to make it stateside in time for the holidays.

### Incoming mail

- Parcel Post Mail – Nov. 13
- Space Available Mail – Nov. 27
- Parcel Airlift Mail (PAL) – Dec. 4
- Priority/1st Class Mail – Dec. 6

### Outgoing mail

- Space Available Mail – Nov. 20
- PAL – Dec. 4
- Priority 1st Class Mail – Dec. 11

Although the post offices will be receiving extra help for the holiday mail influx, Wright said Soldiers can do their part to ensure their packages make it home in time.

"If they plan ahead, then it makes our jobs easier," she said.

This assistance is reciprocated by a more assured holiday morale boost for those serving in theater.



### Incoming & outgoing mail tips

- Ensure each article of mail has the correct address
- Never use "Afghanistan" or in country cities, only proper APO addresses
- The size of the box should be appropriate for its contents
- Wrap and cushion items snugly so that the box will not be crushed during shipment

## Enduring Voices

*What is the most important lesson you have learned during your tour?*



**Air Force  
Airman 1st Class  
Michael Guyer**  
455th EOG

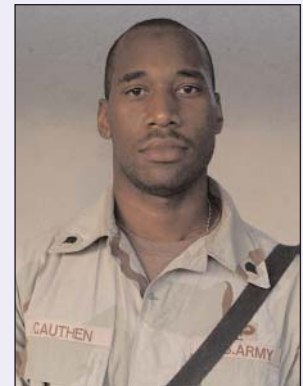
*"If you don't look at the guy next to you, you won't know what to do."*



**Sgt. Guy Wycoff**  
Co. B, 1st Bn., 505th PIR  
*"To survive in a combat zone, you need teamwork."*



**Staff Sgt. William Ramos**  
76th Inf. Bde.  
Indiana National Guard  
*"We are all part of a bigger team."*



**Spc. Jerome Cauthen**  
Co. B, 1st Bn., 505th PIR  
*"The little things count."*

RAPID FIELDING  
INITIATIVE

Army issues updated,  
advanced combat gear  
to deployed Soldiers

Story and photo by Sgt. Frank Magni  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ORGUN-E, Afghanistan — As the battlefield of the 21st century evolves, so does the equipment that keeps Soldiers in the fight.

In response to the rapid deployments of the past few years, the Army Chief of Staff created the Rapid Fielding Initiative.

Most units receive an RFI issue before deploying. But in a time of no notice or last minute deployment orders, there are still Soldiers who get missed. In this case, the RFI team will travel to the field to get equipment to Soldiers, said Sgt. 1st Class James Mical, Army Test and Evaluation Command RFI consultant.

The RFI team issues a variety of equipment, from boots and gloves to sunglasses and improved helmets.

“With technology changing so fast and Soldiers rapidly deploying, it is necessary to have a flexible solution to get equipment to the Soldiers,” said Philip Whitlock, RFI team member.

The advantages of RFI are numerous, said Whitlock. Because the team can travel throughout the world, they are able to bring equipment to Soldiers whose units did not have the opportunity to receive the RFI issue at their home station.

“We go where the Soldiers are,” said Whitlock.

Once the RFI team visits the Soldiers in the field, they send the measurements and sizes back to the RFI warehouse in Kuwait. There, a duffel bag is filled with each Soldier’s gear based on his sizes. The bag is then sent back to the individual’s unit for issue. This process can have the gear back to the Soldier in about 15 days.

Emphasis on the Soldier is one reason RFI is gaining in popularity within the Army, said Whitlock.

Not only do they pay close attention to customer service, but the equipment they issue keeps them popular, he said.



**Luis Samuel, RFI team member, fits an Advanced Combat Helmet to Spc. Richard Delgado, Co. C, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt., at FOB Orgun-E. The ACH is an improvement over the Army’s traditional Kevlar helmet. It’s lighter and has a better fit. The ACH is also designed to work better with the Interceptor Body Armor system.**

The items issued vary by the type of unit a Soldier is in, but most get improved T-shirts, belts and socks along with silk-weight long underwear, goggles, hydration systems, improved knee pads, fleece jackets and bib overalls.

Some Soldiers are even issued multi-function tools and other tools they use as part of their military occupational specialty. Combat Soldiers are also issued modular lightweight load-carrying equipment, commonly known to troops as MOLLE gear.

On Forward Operating Base Orgun-E, the RFI team came to

See *RFI*, Page 15

AAFES Services Hours of Operation					
Bagram Air Base		Kandahar Airfield		TF Phoenix	CFC-A
PX	Massage	PX	Alterations	PX	PX
0230-1630	0400-1800	0500-1700	0500-1700	0430-1630	0430-1630
Shoppette	Alterations	Burger King	Embroidery Shop	Barber Shop	Barber Shop
0230-1630	0430-1430	0430-1730	0500-1700	0330-1530	0330-1530
Burger King	Embroidery Shop	Coffee Shop	Gift Shops	Alterations	
0430-1730	0430-1430	24hrs	0500-1700	0330-1630	
Food Court	Gift Shops	Main Barber Shop	Sports Apparel	Coffee Shop	
0600-1630	0430-1430	0500-1700	0500-1700	24 hours	
Barber Shop	Sports Apparel	Lagoon Barber Shop	Black Ops Store		
0430-1530	0430-1430	0300-1700	0500-1700		
Day Spa	Coffee Shop	Day Spa	Leather Shop		
0400-1600	Opening Soon	0500-1700	0500-1700		

\* All times in  
Zulu/GMT



# CMA helps give children a bright future

Story and photo by  
Sgt. Jennifer S. Emmons  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

ARGHANDAB DISTRICT, Afghanistan — The nurse tried to sooth the screaming baby as the physician assistant squeezed liquid medication into the infant's mouth.

Soldiers with Task Force Victory's Surgeon Cell were in a mountainous region of Zabul province in southern Afghanistan providing medical care to the local population and their farm animals through a cooperative medical assistance.

Local children excitedly gathered to see medical professionals, many for the first time in their lives.

Many of the children treated had worms because of poor hygiene and sanitation, said Capt. Heather Canzoneri, Task Force 325th Combat Support Hospital nurse.

"These children have been deprived of healthcare for many reasons. That's why it's very important that we come out here and have contact with them and take care of them," she said.

The children walked from miles away, over mountainous, rocky terrain — many with no shoes — to meet the Coalition forces and receive treatment for their medical needs.

But the CMA offered more than treatment.

"We are trying to teach them to (develop) better health, and better hygiene (habits)," said Canzoneri.

Eventually the children will live healthier lives.

"It's going to take a long time, because we have to educate the population," said Canzoneri. "But, this is the beginning. It has to start somewhere, and that's what we're here to do."

Every child left the CMA with a packet of multivitamins to take home with them, said Canzoneri.

"We are giving them enough vitamins to last a week or so," she said. "But the most important thing is the fact that we are trying to build relationships."

The CMA provides a brighter future for the children in more ways than basic health care and education by ensuring the health of the livestock.

Treating the herds is going to help the children in the long run, said Maj. Trudy Salerno, TF Victory Surgeon Cell veterinarian.

"I think primarily because we are going to help their parents feed them," she said. "We're going to keep the animals alive. We're going to increase productivity and build herd numbers so they can afford to feed their families."

One of the predominate health



**Capt. Heather Canzoneri, TF 325th Combat Support Hospital nurse, examines a cut on a boy's wrist during a CMA in Arghndob.**

problems in this country is nutritional diseases, which come from vitamin and protein deficiencies, said Lt. Col. Michael Lennon, TF Victory Surgeon Cell veterinarian.

"If we can increase the animal population, it'll benefit them a lot, because they will have more protein sources," he said. "That's important, especially for the kids."

Seeing the Soldiers providing healthcare to both people and animals was a first for these young children, especially seeing female Soldiers, said Salerno.

"Women here don't work with large animals. Seeing me work with cattle is opening up their view of the world quite a bit,"

she said.

The kids are curious about everything and have many questions, said Canzoneri.

"Many of the children have trust issues because of the war and everything that's gone on in this country," she said.

Helping the children to create healthier lives for themselves will foster better relationships between Coalition forces and the Afghan people, said Staff Sgt. Thomas Rodriguez, Task Force Victory Surgeon Cell Operations noncommissioned officer in charge.

"We are literally on the frontier of freedom," he said. "So we are putting our best foot forward by taking care of children."

## PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

**ANA troops prepare to board U.S. Air Force Air National Guard C-130 airplanes in Kabul before their deployment to Herat in August to provide stability during heavy factional fighting in the province.**

*Photo by Spc. Joseph McFarren, Combined Task Force Phoenix*

If you have high quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to [carls@baf.afgn.army.mil](mailto:carls@baf.afgn.army.mil). Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.



# HMH-769

## Marines do heavy lifting for Coalition

Story by Sgt. Frank Magni  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — With Coalition forces stationed throughout Afghanistan, logistical support is one of the most important factors in supporting the fight against terrorism.

While there is more than one way to push the necessary supplies to remote forward operating bases, the Marines of Heavy

Marine Helicopter Squadron 769 have been using their CH-53 Sea Stallion helicopters to keep everything moving.

For the last seven months, the unit has transported everything from supplies and personnel to mail and vehicles — learning key lessons along the way and remaining an essential asset to the joint arena.

Based out of Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., the “Roadhogs” came to Afghanistan with extensive experience in hot, dry conditions, but still found challenges in Afghanistan’s climatic extremes along the way.

“Our challenges haven’t been the enemy, it has been the conditions,” said Marine Lt. Col. Rick Mullen, HMH-769 commanding officer.



Courtesy Photo

**A CH-53 Sea Stallion takes off on its way to deliver supplies to service members throughout Afghanistan.**



Staff Sgt. Monica Garreau

**Gunnery Sgt. John Ellis, HMH-769 crew chief, scans the ground below for potential threats to his CH-53 Sea Stallion during a flight to FOB Asadabad. The Marines of HMH-769 regularly transferred troops and equipment throughout Afghanistan during their seven-month deployment here.**



Sgt. Frank Magni

**New Zealand Lance Cpl. Simon Haughley, backs an all-terrain vehicle to be used in Bamain province into the cargo hold of a CH-53 Sea Stallion. The aircraft is transporting the vehicle on a regular resupply route.**

Although experienced in desert conditions, the squadron still found obstacles to overcome during their deployment.

Rotating through the hottest part of the year, Marine Lt. Col. Jim Barich, HMH-769 pilot, said engine power remained his crew’s main concern with each flight.

Because of high altitude and hot temperatures the Roadhogs encountered on missions, the amount of cargo always remained a main concern for each aircrew. The conditions were sometimes so extreme that the aircraft was only able to carry one-third of its cargo capacity.

As a result of the conditions, the Marines of HMH-769 adjusted their techniques of aircraft loading.

“Since the difference of as little as 500 pounds can make a difference while in flight, we try to be exact as possible,” said Marine Staff Sgt. Robert McIntosh, HMH-769 crew chief.

McIntosh said the unit now weighs everything before loading, instead of the traditional method of estimating.

See *HMH-769*, Page 11



*'Be Right and Go Forward'***Afghan MoD graduates first IG class**

Story and photo by Col. Randy Pullen  
Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan — The first class of Ministry of Defense and Afghan National Army Inspectors General graduated in a ceremony held at the Ministry of Defense in Kabul Sept. 29.

Fifty-nine students from the MoD, the General Staff and the ANA's Central Corps received their certificates of training and inspector general insignia.

The graduation of these new inspectors general and the implementation of an inspector general system into the MoD and ANA is the latest step in increasing professionalism of the Afghan defense sector.

The Inspector General Training Course began on Jan. 26. Twenty-three courses were taught over the next 32 weeks. Some of these classes were: "What is an IG," "The 11 Rules of Success for an IG," "Assistance Function," "Inspections Function," "Investigations Function," "Auditing Function," "Commander's Guidance to his IG," "Leadership and Command at Senior Levels," "Senior Leaders and the National Assembly," "Senior Leaders and Legal Services," and "Senior Leaders and IG."

ANA Maj. Gen. Abdullah, the General Staff IG, taught the final class. IG students were taught by senior officers of the MoD, ANA and Central Corps throughout the course. It added valuable

insight for the students, as the senior officers discussed their military experiences with them and how they perceived situations faced by inspectors general, based on that experience.

Addressing the graduating class, ANA Lt. Gen. Shir Mohammad Karimi, chief of Operations for the General Staff, said that IGs have a special place in every army in the world.

"They are the advisors to the defense minister and to the chief of the general staff," said Karimi. "They are responsible for investigating and analyzing every aspect of the units and their personnel status and report back on what they find."

Karimi also said if soldiers have problems or complaints, the IGs should listen to the soldiers and report what they hear to their superiors in the MoD and the General Staff. Then they must root out why the problem occurred.

"The inspectors general have to make sure their units are combat ready, morally and professionally," he added. "They must ask soldiers, noncommissioned officers and officers about their personal problems and advise them wisely how to deal with these matters."

Mike Martin, Military Professional Resources Project Manager, echoed Karimi on what is expected of the new IGs.

"IGs are expected to be right so you must be accurate in your findings," he

said. "IGs are also expected to be fair, honest and impartial no matter the outcome. IGs must place the interests of the ANA above their own."

He told them that they were entering into a rewarding field, where they will be able to learn how the Ministry of Defense, the General Staff and the ANA are managed, gain much expertise and have the opportunity to advise senior leaders.

"You will be known, respected and relied upon as an expert and an advisor," said Martin. "As such, you will be able to help many, many soldiers of the ANA."

Speaking on behalf of the Inspectors General, Said Mohammad Abulfazil, Ministry of Defense inspector general, requested that First Deputy Minister of Defense Rahim Wardak and Chief of the General Staff Bismullah Khan support the IGs in carrying out their duties. Abulfazil also made a promise to the leaders of the MoD and ANA.

"I pledge that we will be successful in our assignments," he said.

The Deputy Defense Minister said that the graduation marked an important change for the ANA. Like Abulfazil, he also made a commitment.

"I promise on behalf of the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff to support your activities and your missions. I wish further success for all IGs in the future," said Wardak.

Following the remarks, Wardak, Bismullah Khan and other senior officials presented graduation certificates to the 59 new MoD, General Staff, and Central Corps inspectors general. The new IGs then took their oath of office and received their IG insignia which bears the motto "Droit et Avant" – "Be Right and Go Forward."

The IG system implemented for the new Afghan National Army focuses on the well-being of soldiers, with safeguarding military personnel the primary task and safeguarding equipment secondary. Under this system, Afghan military IGs will inquire and periodically report, in an objective manner, on discipline, efficiency, economy, morale, training and combat readiness throughout the army. They will maintain a balance of being an extension of the commander and yet being independent enough so that soldiers can come to them with confidence.



The first class of Afghan Ministry of Defense and Afghan National Army Inspectors General wait to receive their graduation certificates and IG insignia Sept. 29.



**Airman 1st Class Jay Marshall, 81st Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, guides an A-10 Thunderbolt II down the runway for take off Oct. 13.**

## Active-duty, reservists combine air power

Story and photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Jennifer Lindsey  
455th Expeditionary Operations Group

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — In Afghanistan, Air Force Reserve and active-duty pilots have teamed together to protect U.S. and Coalition forces from attackers whose aim is to disrupt national stability and to prevent infrastructure improvements, including the building of wells, schools and roads.

Fulfilling such missions requires 24-hour operations and live munitions, but pilots and operations support personnel from the 81st Expeditionary Fighter Squadron deployed here say that's the only difference between serving at Bagram Air Base and at their home stations.

"We train like we fight so we're ready for contingencies like this," said Air Force Capt. Travis (last names of pilots are omitted for security reasons), 81st EFS pilot deployed from Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany.

Throughout the year, Spangdahlem pilots practice aerial tactics and communications skills at NATO and joint-service exercises, which prepare the active-duty Airmen for sister-service and Coalition force teamwork. Air Force reservists also practice in such exercises and some serve as full-time reservists or pilots in their civilian jobs, ensuring there is plenty of experience sitting in the A-10 Thunderbolt II cockpits.

"The reservist and active-duty mix here has well exceeded my expectations," said Air Force Lt. Col. John, 81st EFS commander. "Once we all got here, we went straight to work. Here we support a lot of customers at the table, working mostly with the Army, escorting convoys and providing Afghan presidential escort, and defending the troops as needed."

Working 24-hour ops means pulling 12-plus hour shifts, leaving little personal time and can result in "Groundhog Day" syndrome — doing the same thing day in and day out — which can wear on morale, said Air Force Staff Sgt. Rebecca Nye, squadron operations desk technician.

Here, however, to stave off the feeling of déjà-vu, pilots, "ops desk" technicians, maintainers and ground troops make the time to visit each other's shops for some face-to-face time with the people they're supporting.

"There's a lot of satisfaction in knowing we're helping the guys on the ground," said Travis.

"When we get together, we'll share our side of the story, which helps us gain a perspective of what the other guy sees and share lessons learned. This kind of face-to-face interaction only helps us to get better," he said.

Because the 81st EFS pilots have trained as they fight, communicating with and providing cover for ground troops is the pilots' number one focus.

"We don't have to think about flying because it's second nature to us," said Travis.

"Our entire focus is on communicating with the combat controller (who travels with the ground troops), who tells us where our friendly forces are, the order of battle on the ground, and where to employ our munitions," he said.

When pilots here pair up to head out for a combat mission, the only factor taken into consideration is experience, said Lt. Col. Ozzie, 81st EFS deputy operations officer. Often it's a more experienced active-duty or Reserve pilot with another pilot who needs more time in the aircraft to increase his qualifications.

The teamwork involved in "keeping the A-10s in the air" helps keep the energy high and mission accomplishment uppermost in the minds of the Airmen, said Col. John, 455th Expeditionary Operations Group commander.

"I am extremely impressed with the way the two squadrons have melded in both operations and maintenance," said the colonel. "It is impossible to tell which unit a person is from unless you ask them. They have come together here without working together prior to the deployment and formed a single, lethal airpower team. It's a validation of the great leadership and NCO cadre in both the reserve and active component."





## Combat corpsmen provide care to Marines

Story by  
Spc. Cheryl Ransford  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO,** Afghanistan — For nearly three centuries, brave men and women have fought to guarantee the security and prosperity of our great nation and to defend freedom and democracy around the globe.

A group of unsung heroes supporting these war fighters are the Navy combat corpsmen who accompany Marines on combat missions to provide medical support. All are volunteers.

Since the Marine Corps does not have medical personnel, the Marines rely on the skills of these Sailors assigned to their units.

"People should know that we put our lives on the line for the Marines and our fellow Americans back home," said Navy Seaman Junor Reeves, a line corpsman.

Reeves is one of 25 Navy corpsmen assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, operating out of Forward Operating Base Salerno. The corpsmen are a proud group of Sailors, eager to do their job to their highest potential.



Sgt. Frank Magni

**A combat corpsmen administers an IV to a young Afghan during a mission near FOB Asadabad. Their primary mission is to treat Marines in combat.**

Corpsmen embody what all in medicine should aspire for — an unquantifiable zeal for the care of those put in their charge, said Reeves.

"Corpsmen are never too

tired or too busy to stop and do absolutely everything in their power to take care of Marines," he said.

The Sailors in the hospital corps go everywhere the

Marines go, providing medical and dental assistance as required. Corpsmen serving with the Marines have been allowed the privilege of wearing the Marine uniform when attached to any of the Marines' many units. They are the only group so honored.

When asked about the importance of the Navy-Marine relationship in a combat zone, Marine 1st Sgt. James Brooks, Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Bn., 6th Marines, said it is what the Department of the Navy is all about.

"Even though we're considered separate branches of the military, we are still very much a part of one another," he said.

The Navy and the Marines are a team that has fought together from the beginning on land and at sea.

While there will always be a sort of sibling rivalry between Marines and Sailors, Marines know that many of their forefathers owe their lives to the Navy corpsmen who worked alongside them, said Brooks.

Someday they too may have a Navy corpsman responsible for saving their life during the heat of combat.

## HMH-769: Marines provide supplies to forward locations

*continued from Page 8*

"The margin for error is so small when it comes to our calculations for engine power," said Barich.

Aside from cargo, the unit also tackles the enormous task of transporting Coalition members throughout the theater. This service also challenged the Roadhogs' organizational skills.

"There have been times that we've landed and the aircraft was mobbed with people trying to get on," said McIntosh.

To better organize the flow of personnel they take from Bagram Air Base to forward operating bases across the country, and the ones they picked up along the way, the unit worked with representatives from each remote location. Instead of working direct-

ly with the crew chiefs, personnel coordinated in advance with the representatives on the ground.

One contingent of forces who benefited from the services provided by the Roadhogs were the New Zealanders who run the Bamian Provincial Reconstruction Team site.

With Bamian's remote location, transporting supplies on the ground takes the better part of a day, a problem that is solved thanks to the air support of HMH-769, said New Zealand Lance Cpl. Simon Haughey, New Zealand National Support Element.

"They are very critical to our mission success at the PRT," said Haughey. "It is one of our fastest methods to get supplies forward."

McIntosh said working with groups like

the Kiwis was one of his favorite parts of the mission in Afghanistan.

"For us, working with all the different services and (Coalition partners) was one of the highlights," said McIntosh. "Working with everybody kind of showed me that other than our aircraft, there really isn't any big difference between (the Coalition partners)."

The unit was replaced in October by the Marines of HMH-462 from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif. And with all the knowledge accumulated by the members of HMH-769, their successors should depart next year with the same rewarding feeling that Barich describes.

"We were out there delivering the right people, with the right supplies, to do the right thing," he said.

# Engineers pave the way for Afghan growth

Story and photo by Spc. Dijon Rolle  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

TARIN KOWT, Afghanistan — Mounds of rock, dirt and other rubble piled up as combat engineers from the 528th and 367th Engineer battalions worked to cut and clear the northern portion of the Tarin Kowt road.

The 150-kilometer stretch of road extends from Tarin Kowt to Kandahar and promises to shorten the commute for travelers making the journey between the two areas. Currently, the trek takes nearly 11 hours. Once the road is complete, it will only take five-and-a-half hours.

The engineers are part of an advance party working on the northern section of the road. Since late September, the team has been using heavy graders and rollers to clear the area for the road, forming its foundation.

The Tarin Kowt road project has presented Army engineers with a unique set of challenges.

Sharp rocks buried beneath the soil often puncture the tires on the heavy machinery equipment used to clear the roads, causing delays.

"We blow a tire just about everyday," said Spc. Eric Knowlton, Company B, 367th Engineer Battalion, heavy equipment operator.

"It's kinda frustrating, but we just work through it and try to get the job done."

Finding enough water can also be a problem. Engineers need the water to smooth and shape the sub-base of the road. Local jingle trucks are able to provide just enough to support daily operations.

The group is also waiting for the rest of their equipment, including a mine detection system, to arrive.

More Soldiers from Kandahar are also en route to to lend a hand to the engineers working on the road.

In addition to reducing travel time, the Tarin Kowt road will have an even greater impact for the people of Afghanistan.

"It's going to help the economy of Tarin Kowt and Kandahar, and also help with extending the influence of the national government into the region," said Capt. Stephen Harper, 528th Eng. Bn. civil engineer.

Despite its challenges, Army engineers

are looking forward to seeing the fruits of their labor firsthand.

"Before, we were stationed in Bagram and we were just doing self-sustaining missions which is still important, but it's a lot more motivating to me to be out here helping the people. I'm really proud of it," said Harper.

There is also a team of combat engineers stationed at Forward Operating Base Tiger working on the road. Construction on the Tarin Kowt road project is expected to continue well into next year.

The initial estimated timeline for the project is 18 to 24 months, with plans to eventually surface the entire road with asphalt. The road is currently hard-packed soil, hardened by a combination of watering and compacting with heavy rollers.

"We're a combat heavy battalion and we're the best battalion in the theater right now to do a project like this," said Harper. "It's given a lot of people the chance to do what they've been trained to do. It's also helping to develop some young guys into some great leaders out here."

## Religious Services Around the CJOA

### CFC-A

#### Sunday

0500 - Small Group Study  
0630 - Traditional Prot.  
1000 - Prot. Service - U.S. Emb.  
1330 - Catholic Mass - Italian Emb.  
1430 - Prot. Contemporary Praise  
1530 - Small Group Study 201  
1530 - Small Group Study 301

#### Tuesday

0930 - Chaplain's Call

#### Wednesday

1400 - Small Group Study 401

#### Friday

0830 - Latter-Day Saints  
1330 - Jewish Service  
1330 - Small Group Study 101

#### Saturday

0930 - Chaplain's Call  
1130 - Catholic Mass

\* All times  
Zulu/GMT

### Camp Phoenix

#### Sunday

0430 - Catholic (Italian)  
0530 - Non-Denominational Prot.  
1330 - Catholic (French)  
1530 - Non-Denominational Prot.

#### Tuesday

1430 - Bible Study

#### Wednesday

1430 - Gospel Bible Study

#### Saturday

1430 - Gospel Worship Service

### FOB Salerno

#### Sunday

0300 - Foundations Bible Class  
0400 - Traditional Prot. Worship  
0530 - Latter-Day Saints Worship  
0830 - Gospel Service  
1400 - Inspirational Movie Night

#### Saturday

1500 - Contemporary Prot.

### Bagram Air Base

#### Sunday

0400 - Liturgical Prot.  
0530 - Roman Catholic Mass  
0830 - Latter-Day Saints  
0700 - Traditional Prot.  
1115 - Korean Language Prot.  
1300 - Gospel Service

#### Monday

1400 - Gospel Choir Rehearsal

#### Tuesday

1400 - Gospel Bible Study  
1545 - Prot. Music Rehearsal

#### Wednesday

1600 - Catholic Music Rehearsal

#### Thursday

1430 - Gospel Choir Rehearsal

#### Friday

1430 - Jewish Prayer  
1500 - Women's Bible Study

#### Saturday

0500 - Seventh-Day Adventist  
1330 - Korean Choir Rehearsal  
1515 - Roman Catholic Mass  
1630 - Prot. Choir Rehearsal

#### Daily, Monday-Friday

0700 - Roman Catholic Mass  
0745 - Noon-Day prayer

### Kandahar Airfield

#### Sunday

0430 - Catholic Mass  
0500 - Bible Study (325th FSB)  
0630 - Prot. Worship  
1330 - Gospel Choir Practice  
1400 - Sunday School  
1530 - Gospel Service

#### Monday

1300 - Gospel Choir Practice

#### Tuesday

1430 - Purpose-driven Life Study  
1300 - Gospel Choir Practice  
1430 - Praise Team Practice  
1530 - Bible Study

#### Wednesday

1300 - Gospel Choir Practice  
1430 - Praise Team Practice  
1530 - Prot. Worship

#### Thursday

1430 - Praise Team Practice  
1500 - Latter-Day Saints

#### Friday

0830 - Islamic Prayers  
1330 - Jewish Sabbath Prayers

#### Saturday

0400 - Men's Breakfast  
1300 - Catholic Mass  
1430 - Praise Team Practice

#### Daily, Monday-Friday

0330 - Catholic Mass



# Safety on the construction site is job one

## Safeguarding the Coalition

Story and photo by  
Spc. Cheryl Ransford  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

AFGHANISTAN — With so many simultaneous construction and refurbishing projects being conducted around the country, there is an increased risk to personnel safety when heavy equipment is in use.

While most of the projects are often managed by junior enlisted service members, leaders are always present to ensure the standards of safety are adhered to, said Sgt. 1st Class Stanley Griffin, 528th Eng. Bn. horizontal platoon leader, Louisiana National Guard.

Every morning there is a safety brief to remind the Soldiers of the standards, and to ensure everyone has them fresh in their minds, said Griffin.

Safety standards and focus are two of the most important factors involved in operating heavy equipment.

As an operator, Spc. Michael Henry, 528th Eng. Bn. heavy equipment operator, knows the dangers of just what could happen if he loses focus for even a minute.

"It's big equipment, and it's easy to lose track of your ground guide," he said. "There are a lot of blind spots. You have to stay focused at all times and be aware of your surroundings."

Being aware of your surroundings with heavy equipment includes knowing what the safety precautions are for each piece of equipment, said Griffin.

Since each piece of equipment has different standards for proper uniform and safety gear, the operators need to know the equipment they are using and what the safety measures are, he said.

"For some equipment, the operator may only be required to wear a hard hat or Kevlar, while other equipment also requires the use of hearing protection and gloves," said Griffin.

Knowing the standards will keep operators and ground crew safe, said Staff Sgt. Jimmy Brown, 528th Eng. Bn. squad leader.

"There is no room for error on a job site," he said. "If you are the operator and you lose focus, there could be someone around you on the ground that you didn't see walk up. If you go into your own world while



**Staff Sgt. David Geiselman, HHC, 1st Bn., 505th PIR, gives hand signals to Spc. Arcelay Martinez, 268th Trans. Co., while he prepares to pick up a pallet.**

operating heavy equipment, you're wrong."

It's also important for the Soldiers to brush up on the standardized set of hand signals for the particular equipment they are operating, before getting started on any mission.

"Most of the guys are trained on all the equipment. However, some of them only use certain pieces on a regular basis," said Griffin. "Before they start using a piece of equipment they haven't used in a while, the project noncommissioned officer in charge makes sure they know the proper hand signals and what they mean."

The safety standards are made clear to all personnel on each project site. Although

accidents have happened, most can be avoided with more training, said Griffin.

"Even though accidents are rare, they do happen," he said. "If someone is uncomfortable with the piece of equipment or the task they are asked to do, they just need to notify the site NCOIC and they will have someone else take over the task," he said. "There is no need for unnecessary danger when it can be prevented."

The best way for NCOs to prevent safety violations and injuries around heavy equipment is to stress the importance of safety, said Griffin. Good training and following procedures are two important ways a construction site stays safe.



## 'Touch 'n Go' lifts morale of deployed service members

The U.S. Air Forces in Europe Band travels throughout the world performing for service members to provide entertainment and boost morale.

Their stop at Bagram Air Base Oct. 24 was just another example.

"There is no other place I want to be than right here supporting the troops who are working hard to protect and defend our freedoms and the freedoms of others," said "Touch 'n Go" vocalist Air Force Tech Sgt. Donna Siler.



Photos by Spc. Cheryl Ransford

**Above: USAFE Band members Air Force Tech Sgt. Donna Siler (right) and Air Force Master Sgt. Miguel Gomez clap with the music as the audience sings along.**

**Upper left: The USAFE Band "Touch 'n Go" provides live musical entertainment for the personnel assigned to Bagram Air Base Oct. 24 at the MWR clamshell.**

**Lower left: Air Force Gen. Robert "Doc" Foglesong, USAFE commander, sings for the personnel of Bagram Air Base.**

**Below: Service members and civilians applaud the USAFE Band performance.**





## Letters to the Editor

The *Freedom Watch* would like to publish your opinions and comments on topics of importance and interest to those serving in Operation Enduring Freedom.

Please send your thoughts and feelings in letter form to the editor. All letters e-mailed to the editor must include full name, unit, address and, when possible, telephone number. We will not print anonymous letters. Please limit all letters to 200 words or less.

We reserve the right to edit letters for length, clarity and decorum.

Please send your letters to: [carls@baf.afgn.army.mil](mailto:carls@baf.afgn.army.mil)

We look forward to hearing from you!

## Soccer time...



Sgt. Denise Schultz

**Service members assigned to the Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan donated soccer balls and nets to the children of the Khoshal Khan High School in Kabul. Here, Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Ralph Tormey (left), Air Force Maj. Robert Levin (on top of net) and Marine Gunnery Sgt. James Paradowski ensure the net is set up properly. The joint service team also distributed school supplies donated by their families and friends.**

## RFI *continued from Page 6*

properly size Soldiers for the Advanced Combat Helmet. The unit, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, was issued a majority of their RFI items before deploying, but the ACH was a supplemental item.

The ACH is an improvement over the traditional helmet because of its advanced design, said Luis Samuel, RFI team member.

"It is designed to work better with interceptor body armor," said Samuel. "It is easier to shoot from the prone position with these new helmets"

The ACH is also one-and-a-half pounds lighter than the traditional Kevlar helmet and has a four-point chin strap system for a better fit.

It also provides a better fit because each helmet has rotating pads that fit to different sized heads.

Each ACH comes with a night vision mount, helmet cover that is reversible with either desert or woodland pattern, movable pads, and the four-point chin strap retaining system. It can also be fitted with a communications system.

While the ACH is just now being issued to many Soldiers in Operation Enduring Freedom, Spc. Edgar Salas, Company C, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt., wore the ACH when he was with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) during the early phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Salas said he was very satisfied with the helmet during the months he used it in Iraq.

"It fit so well, and it is so much lighter that you would sometimes forget that you would have it on," said Salas. "It really helps lessen neck and shoulder fatigue on long missions."

Spc. Dan Maulsby, Co. C, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt., said he likes RFI for a few different reasons.

"It feels good, because it feels like the Army is going out of its way to get us the best equipment they can," said Maulsby.

The piece of equipment that has been most useful is the MOLLE vest, said Maulsby.

"These vests are comfortable and practical," he said. "It makes sense because each person can put the pockets in different positions. This is better, because with the different weapon systems, each person can put their ammo where it is most efficient for them."

Both Maulsby and Salas said all the equipment they have received from RFI has been very useful and that they would likely have purchased some of the items themselves if they weren't issued them.

This is a common response heard by the RFI team and has become one of the most rewarding aspects of their jobs.

"These are all items Soldiers were buying anyway, we were just giving them something they can use," said Samuel. "This just cuts down on (unnecessary) cost to the individual Soldier."

# Never forget



***Those who have fallen before us are true heroes. They made the ultimate sacrifice. The service members pictured here gathered for one such hero whose remains were evacuated to Bagram Air Base.***